

lemon trees fascinate me, palm trees do not
kindness fascinates me, love does not

preciseness fascinates me and the end of long-
windedness.

ROCK

here were all these males tuning their guitars
not a woman around
and they were content with that.
then they started arguing about who was best
and what was wrong with the so-called best.
and a couple of them had been famous
and they sat there on my rug
drinking my wine and beer and smoking my
cigarettes.

two of them stood up
to duke it out
and that's when I ran them all off
with their guitars and their guitar cases
out into the moonlight
still arguing.

I closed the door.
then I leaned against the couch and drained a beer
fast and I
gagged:
not a very good night:
it was full of
ashes.

TONGUE-CUT

he lives in the back and comes to my door
carrying his shotgun in one hand.
"listen," he says, "there was a guy sitting
on your couch on the porch while you were
gone. he didn't act right. I asked him what
he wanted. he said he wanted to see you.
I told him you weren't in. do you know a
tall black guy named 'Dave'?"

"I dunno nobody like that"

"I saw this guy on the street later and I asked him what he was doing in the neighborhood."

"I don't know no tall black named 'Dave'."

"I've been watching your place. I ran off a couple of those Germans. you don't want to see any Germans, do you?"

"no, Max, I don't like Germans, Frenchmen and especially I don't like Englishmen. Mexicans and Greeks are all right but there is something I don't like about the looks on their faces."

"there have been more Germans than any other kind."

"run them off"

"o.k., I will ... when you leaving town again?"

"tomorrow."

"tomorrow ... ?"

"tomorrow, yes, and if you find some fucker sitting on my porch couch, blow his god damned head off"

"o.k., I will"

"thanks, Max"

"it's all right"

he walks back to his court in the back with his shotgun and goes inside.

"my god," says Linda Lee, "you know what you've done?"

"yes," I say.

"he believes in you. when we come back there'll be a dead body on the porch."

"all right"

"don't you remember when I took my day of silence? you told him you had cut my tongue out ... and he accepted it matter of factly"

"Max is the only real buddy I've got"

"you're an accessory to the fact"

"I don't like uninvited guys sitting around on my porch couch waiting for me"

"suppose it's some poet, some guy who admires your work?"

"like I said, 'Max is the only real buddy I've got.'
let's start packing"

"what happened to my green dress?"
she asks.

-- Charles Bukowski

San Pedro CA

HIGH SERIOUSNESS

In the middle of class
there came a thumping on some nearby wall.
"That's okay," I said,
we're in the plumbing department building
and don't laugh
because the plumbing majors
will at least get jobs.

But, inexplicably, one student
thought I had said, "the Polish department."
I learned of this second-hand.
Apparently he was himself Polish,
which I hope is not significant,
and he was miffed that I would imply
that students in the Polish department
(we don't have one, by the way)
would spend all their class time
banging their heads against the wall.

That was the afternoon I decided
to let my membership in the Audubon Society lapse
and to join the ACLU,
on the grounds that,
if there has to be a new extinction
I'd rather it be the egrets.

WHY I'M BETTER OFF SKIPPING MEETINGS

I had already offended the "facilitator"
at our curriculum discussion day
with my jeremiad against redundancies and jargon --
at least I think he was offended; maybe
he didn't realize it was his patter
about "imaging positive and individualized
action items" that had set me off.